



# Leader Competency and Army Readiness

Colonel Jon H. Moilanen, U.S. Army

**Leader-development doctrine has come a long way since General Bruce C. Clarke's day, whose article (page 2) on pre-information age tenets of successful combat leadership began this leadership section. So Colonel Moilanen's piece is a fitting close. Moilanen summarizes the competencies required of today's Army leaders and shows how those leader competencies form the bedrock of Army readiness.**

**O**UR ARMY IS PEOPLE.<sup>1</sup> Today, the U.S. Army focuses on transforming an existing organization to produce a particular capability for rapid deployment and strategic responsiveness. The Army sustains a trained and ready land force for meeting responsibilities in a potential major theater war and significant challenges across the spectrum of military operations. These complex and diverse worldwide environments, from small-scale contingency warfighting to humanitarian assistance, also require an improved readiness for strategic responsiveness. Rapidly deploying competent and confident soldiers demonstrates the most effective method of shaping national, international, and global situations in ways favorable to national interests.

In 1999, Secretary of the Army Louis E. Caldera said, "The implications are certainly far more than just platforms. They are organizational. And they're also people skills. [W]e are working on producing leaders for change, not just leaders who are doctrinally capable and competent leaders for warfighting, but leaders also for all kinds of missions that we are asked to be able to do today across the full spectrum, and who will have the capability to continue to deal with an evolving global situation in which the array of threats that you face goes across the entire spectrum, including the homeland defense-type issues and use of weapons of mass destruction."<sup>2</sup>

Success depends on leaders, soldiers, and cohesive teams as the Army transforms into a more strategically responsive, full-spectrum land force. Information-age technologies, enhanced logistics, and improved force-projection means will support, but not preempt, the indispensable readiness value of leaders and the team climate they create. Leaders must be adaptive to ambiguous and changing situations. Soldiers must be comfortable in new multifunctional roles. Teams must be expert at rapidly integrating skills, knowledge, and attributes into united, synchronized, mission-tailored capabilities.

Mental agility enhances the physical agility of current and future systems, platforms, and organizations. Progressive research and development provide enhanced ways and means to man and lead Army

organizations in the 21st Century. One immediate operational requirement is to transform Army strategic responsiveness by merging the lethality and survivability traditionally experienced in the heavy land forces with the agility demonstrated in light land forces. The outcome of this union, propelled by innovative and adaptive leaders, will provide a more mobile, flexible, rapidly deployable land power.

### **Leadership Competencies and the Human Dimension**

The four main leadership competencies are conceptual, interpersonal, technical, and tactical. Values, attributes, and actions complement the four competencies. Using this leadership doctrinal baseline, an evolving combined arms training strategy (CATS) incorporates leader and team performance indicators with task-condition-standard criteria to assess and evaluate proficiency. Appendix B, "Performance Indicators," in Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership*, presents a listing and basic definition of leader performance areas.<sup>3</sup> Ongoing practical unit application and supporting Army experiments will develop more precise measures of leader performance and team measures of effectiveness.

Developing innovative leaders is critical during the Army's transformation. Leader development is one of six Army imperatives: doctrine, organizations, materiel, leader development, training, and soldiers.<sup>4</sup> The Army's current leadership doctrine provides effective fundamental principles to advance leader development in uncertain 21st-century environments. Army modernization and experimentation have charted several promising avenues for continued improvement. Digitization, as well as improved analog command and control systems, offer decisionmaking enablers to improve situational understanding. These capabilities will remain normal conditions of national, multinational, and other operational missions. Mental agility—the ability to maintain the initiative in complex and ambiguous situations—is key to balancing and synchronizing all six Army imperatives and enhancing the adaptive leadership required now and into the foreseeable future.

Leaders must be adaptive, critical thinkers and ingenious doers. They must be innovative and display initiative with prudent risk-taking. They should be able to exploit information-age situational understanding and be agents of change. Characteristics of adaptive leaders are best described using the doctrinal leadership framework of Army leadership. Proven fundamentals of a clearly understood mission and higher commander's intent energize the multifaceted functions of decisionmaking and leadership.<sup>5</sup> Whether the situation involves a small-unit leader in an urban alleyway fight or a senior leader assessing the civil-military effect of multinational situational awareness, the leadership framework of values, skills, knowledge, attributes, and actions remain the foundation for all leadership and leader-development action.

Values are at the core of everything the Army is and does. The seven Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage are integral warrior-ethos attributes. These values provide the sense of purpose necessary to sustain leaders, soldiers, and teams. Values guide the moral and legal bases for action; they help resolve ambiguities in warfighting and operations other than war. Leaders establish an environment in the Army where quality people do what is right; where leaders and soldiers treat others as they would want to be treated themselves; and where all team members have the opportunity to develop their full potential as professional Army leaders.

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U.S. Army General John N. Abrams said, “To maintain . . . proficiency, the Army must train continuously to develop and maintain combat-ready soldiers, leaders, and units capable of performing assigned tasks to specific standards—training that is founded on the basis of tasks, conditions, and standards; training that spans the full spectrum of military operations; and training that focuses on the small unit and small unit leader.”<sup>6</sup>

Anticipating competencies and experiences required of adaptive leaders in future operations, the Army must instill these abilities in much less time than is traditionally allowed. The expertise conveyed through institutional training and education, complemented with operational practice, must be achieved earlier in a leader’s career progression. Identifying innovative ways to hone the special skills, knowledge, and attributes of leaders poses a challenge of developing and implementing new learning models and programs. Learning organizations build on insight from educational courses, unit training, operational missions, and self-developmental programs that center on intellectual responsibility, passion for knowledge, emerging doctrinal and operational concepts, self-assessment, and reflection.

### **Leader Competencies Model**

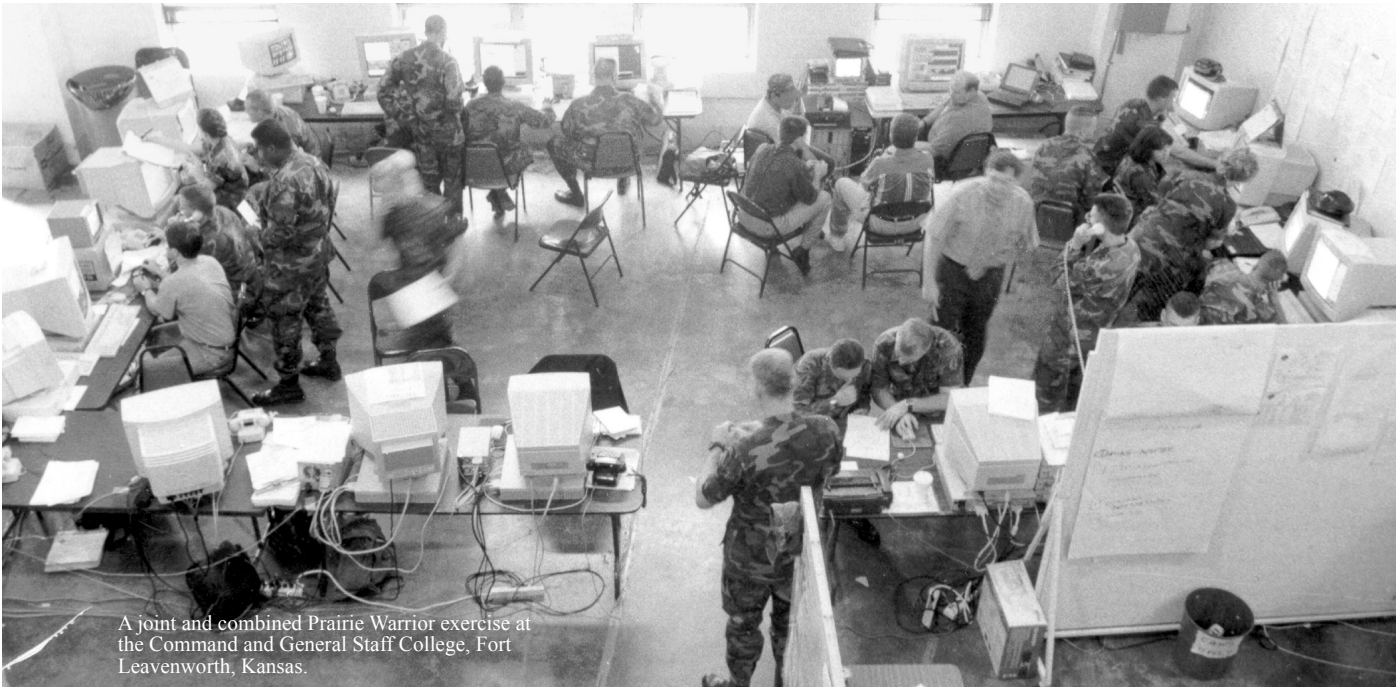
Leader-training scenarios must include all four leader competencies for developing leader and team tasks, conditions, and standards. A menu of complex vignettes allows flexibility in creating varying situations for each echelon of leader and team training. Event-based programs within the unit CATS are an evolution of proven systems with unit operational architecture, leader roles, and new, multifunctional responsibilities. The foundations of battle-focused-training doctrine emphasize the value of using proven methodologies such as training support packages (TSP), mission training plans (MTP), and evolving tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP).

Battle focus recognizes the critical linkage between collective mission-essential tasks and individual leader tasks. Battle tasks clearly state the essential tasks, conditions, and standards for teams and reinforce a notion of employing a team of teams. Analyzing battle tasks results in sets of critical leader tasks within each team function. Different levels of direct, organizational, and strategic leadership will be woven into the doctrinal fabric of a mission-essential task list and its application of TTP. Mission sets will depend on the level of unit organization and leader responsibility. Established initial operational capabilities and priorities of effort will guide the selection of leader-development competencies to insert into particular mission-training sets.

Today’s complex, ambiguous environments confirm that operational- and strategic-level leader skills are required of more junior leaders across a broad range of mission contingencies. The Army’s Leader-Competency Learning Model must keep pace with dynamic requirements to effectively educate and train high-quality leaders.<sup>7</sup> Learning models, educational



Tyler Wirken



A joint and combined Prairie Warrior exercise at the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

approaches, and operational experiences must be honed to reflect the increased demands on leaders. Simulations and simulators, both constructive and virtual, reinforced with live training, will demonstrate integration of critical skills, knowledge, and attributes; leader development; and leader competence. Directing the cumulative combat power of command and control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR), cohesive leaders and teams will conduct operations with critical thinking, creative planning, and adaptive acting to achieve a mission task within a commander's intent.

Developing TSP, MTP, and TTP structure requires a statement of situational conditions for multiple operational environments. Near-term capabilities recognize assigned mission priorities; readily available interim equipment, materiel, and weapons-system capabilities for achieving mission readiness. Once realized, interim capabilities pursue the eventual objective design and team capability that lies beyond near-term practicality. Being able to rapidly deploy and employ mission-ready land forces within specified time lines will remain an overarching measure of effectiveness.

Full-spectrum training must include mission sets conducted in traditional environments and, more important, in vexing asymmetric, nontraditional situations. Conditions must be flexible to place leaders and teams in quickly changing situations. Variables include friendly forces, enemy capabilities, geography and weather limitations, time, and larger civil, political, and military considerations that affect rules of engagement.

Clear implications arise for the Army's institutional education system, increased learning and training within operational assignments, and demands for effective individual self-development programs. These implications point to leader abilities to translate patterns and trends that emerge from diverse operational variables and to perceive the second- and third-order effects on mission and intent.

Whether tasks are simple or complex, speed and precision mark critical aspects of maintaining the initiative as conditions change. Understanding the operational environment and the pace of changes requires adaptive

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abilities at the individual leader level and the leadership to channel team effort into a combined arms, multiecheloned, coherent action plan. These actions require a commander-centric battle focus—a concentration of leader and team resources to mass on a commander's information and intelligence needs, and focus collective combat power on commander-directed essential tasks.

Leaders in the unit develop learning models to train and educate leaders and soldiers in doctrinally based military decisionmaking, enhanced with innovative, disciplined, critical thinking. Leader development is a continuum of improved performance, rather than a finite end point. Leaders mentoring leaders in clearly defined mentor relationships is a key to success. Complementary coaching of soldiers and teams reinforces learning and the motivation to adapt to operational change. Direct and recurring advice and counsel among leaders reinforce adaptive behavior while assessing how intuition might be practiced.

As information-age technologies reshape concepts for learning, programs must exploit the opportunities of knowledge networks, distance learning, and embedded simulations. Competency models will span institutional courses, operational assignments, and professional self-development. Formal schooling will retain its importance during a leader's professional life cycle; however, information-age learning will shift more to unit settings, in garrison and field, with intensive mentoring by leaders and experts.

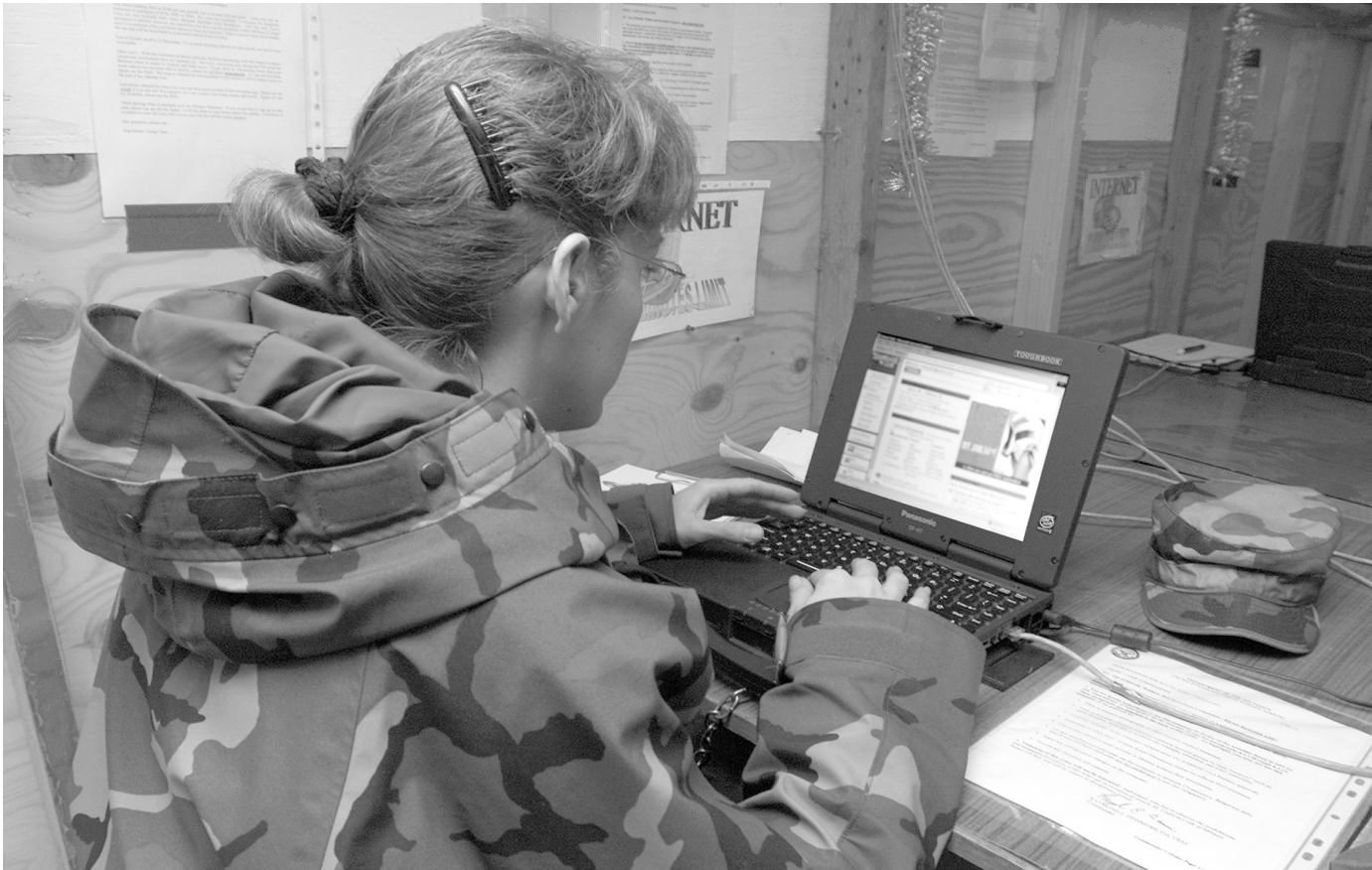
Abrams also said, "Competent, confident and high-performing units are made up of teams of individual soldiers—soldiers who are developed through training and education programs designed to impart specific knowledge and skill sets dependent on career paths and Army needs."<sup>8</sup>

Teaming is a critical aspect of attaining optimal individual, team, and organizational performance. The Army must look beyond Army organizations to explore methods for effective rapid teaming with the other Services; particular civil and governmental organizations; and ongoing research and development programs. The Army must foster rapid teaming capabilities as part of the skills required of adaptive leaders. Units develop expert teams through recurring mission-tailored task organizations and their regular exercise. Habitual duty relationships improve team competencies, which support networked technologies, and a leadership philosophy that encourages trust, confidence, and teamwork.

The emerging Army training and leader-development model builds on a foundation of Army culture, standards, feedback, and experiences. The cement that bonds these components includes institutional education and training, operational assignments, and self-development. Information-age technologies are quickly breaking down the leader-development model image of mutually-supporting but distinct pillars. Personal computer access, faster Inter and Intranet connections, video teleconferencing, and other interactive multimedia opportunities fuse the pillars into an integral leader network of networks. A competency-learning model with real-time, on-call training, sustainment exercises, and operational intelligence exchange portrays the union of multifaceted learning networks and leader ability to share information, expand understanding, and improve competencies.

Constructive, virtual, and live training provides a suite of capabilities that span computer-based training situations; computer-generated imaging and interaction in seemingly physical ways and conditions; and actual conduct of tasks with systems in real time and locations. Integrating common and unique capabilities within these three forms of simulation yield more effective training readiness. Reducing risk while





improving performance better prepares for effective mission conduct. While developing skills and innovative insight efficiently, specific capabilities can be practiced and sustained that would be impossible to conduct in other than actual operational deployments.

The leader-competency model must provide for embedded multifunctional capabilities and subject matter expertise feedback. Characteristics encompass seamless training, mission rehearsal, and operational mission support and execution. Digital systems allow access to knowledge networks of the global information environment; the full suite of Army and Joint simulations; and the links to operational C4ISR systems.

Distance learning and embedded simulations improve the ability to train and sustain habitually associated leaders and units at multiple locations. Venues can be applique with diskette or CD-ROM inserts to training devices and simulators for focused mission vignettes. Laptop computers or other portable systems can provide planning and rehearsal tools during deployment and the reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI) phases of an operational mission.

Leader- and team-development programs are competency-based with information-age technology to optimize institutional information, share expert knowledge and insight, and capture operational lessons. Leader programs tailor to specific unit-mission sets and meet developmental needs of leaders, soldiers, and teams. Building and maintaining a unit-learning climate that reinforces continual organizational and individual improvement is fundamental to success.

Assessment and evaluation focus on the Army leader as the critical element to teach, coach, and mentor leadership actions. Programs must fully engage the leader, soldier, and team. Automated assessment tools, such as

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a 360-degree assessment and feedback survey, help commanders quickly and accurately discern an organizational climate; enablers for personal and subordinate performance; and individual or group dynamics.<sup>9</sup> Levels of command conduct their responsibilities for combined arms and joint readiness with new teams of combined arms capability.

Correspondingly, functional chains of command retain doctrinal responsibilities for ensuring specific areas of expertise in leaders. Integration of behavioral researchers and scientists might be a key combat-power multiplier as direct advisers to organizational leaders and teams. Such experts as the Army Research Institute or the Human Research and Engineering Directorate of the Army Research Laboratory may reside at a unit's home installation or accompany a unit in training deployments and operational missions. Their early introduction into training and sustainment programs and support systems fosters a professional partnership and acknowledges inclusive team membership by soldiers, leaders, unit teams, and subject-matter experts. Recurring exercises and normal daily operations, using leader-competency sets, merge team distinctions among training, education, and operational execution.

Reliable tools must be developed to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of leaders and rapid team building. Some assessment tools will remain evolutionary in nature as the commander implements varied instruments or techniques to identify, assess, train, evaluate, and take timely action to enhance adaptive leadership, multifunctional performance, and team success. Command climate surveys create awareness, and from awareness, leaders can shape teamwork and discipline. Other methods retain the quality of proven formal and informal feedback techniques and procedures too. These include the value of effective coaching and counseling; establishing a mentoring system among peers, superiors, and subordinates; and the support for empowered self-development as progressive evaluations demonstrate a true learning organization.

### **Leaders, the Human Dimension, and Readiness**

Improved warfighting capabilities in a rapidly deployable and relevant land force are hallmarks of Army strategic responsiveness. As the Army transforms with new brigade-size combat-team formations; realizes near-term strategically responsive capabilities; preserves a capability of heavy forces; and acknowledges rapidly changing global environments, it retains a salient emphasis on leader development and essential leader competencies. Companion principles of teamwork, discipline, and a distinct Army warrior ethos echo the Army's core competency. The Army Plan keynotes a prime directive for comprehensive strategic midterm planning and programming guidance for the Army into the next two decades. This guidance highlights the core competency to focus the way ahead for readiness. *The Army Plan (TAP) for Fiscal Year 2000-2015* says that the Army's core competency is "its soldiers, and those who support them, prepared to conduct prompt and sustained operations throughout the entire spectrum of military operations in any environment that requires land-force capabilities."<sup>10</sup>

Leader competency, team training, and Army readiness are essential to each other. Leader development presumes a mid- and long-term commitment to improving decisionmaking and leadership. Leader competency training measures near-term success with tasks, conditions, and standards. Readiness calculates current capability and corresponds it to demonstrated competency. Much more than mere capacity, readiness and competency declare the ability to act, implement, and achieve the mission.

U.S. Army General George S. Patton, Jr., said, "The soldier is the Army.

... To be a good soldier a man must have discipline, self-respect, pride in his unit and in his country, a high sense of duty and obligation to his comrades and to his superiors, and self-confidence born of demonstrated ability.”<sup>11</sup>

The need for confident, competent leaders and soldiers as the bedrock of readiness is as true today as over 50 years ago during the largest worldwide deployment of U.S. land power. Therefore, we need to train the soldier; develop the leader; and build the team.

Experimentation and rapid evaluation of Army capabilities will leverage and improve the human dimension of information-age command and control and teamwork. Learning in a learning organization, leaders and soldiers will achieve situational understanding and the mental agility needed to match the physical agility of current equipment and materiel as well as prepare for the expanded capabilities of pending organizational designs and weapons systems. Adjusting policies and programs based on senior leader guidance and Army Transformation experience and insight, the Army will deliver the caliber and character of leader required in this dynamic operational setting. Leader competencies are the soul and essence of adaptive leader success in the early 21st century. The keen dynamic of combat power will be competent, confident leaders and soldiers operating in cohesive, high-performing teams. **MR**

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## NOTES

1. Lewis Sorley, *Thunderbolt* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 346. The concept of having quality people is at the core of Army success. When General Creighton Abrams became the Army's chief of staff, he focused the Army. As he concentrated on rebuilding post-Vietnam war Army readiness, he said consistently, "People are not in the Army, people are the Army." Senior Army leaders echoed this fundamental theme before and after the rebuilding of the army. See also General Eric K. Shinseki's *The Army Vision: Soldiers on Point for the Nation: Persuasive in Peace, Invincible in War*, online at <www.army.mil/vision/Chain.htm>. He states, "We [the Army] are about leadership; it is our stock and trade, and it is what makes us different. We take soldiers who enter the force and grow them into leaders for the next generation of soldiers. We will continue to develop those leaders through study in the institutional schoolhouse, through field experiences gained in operational assignments, and through personal study and professional reading."

2. In October 1999, when Secretary of the Army Louis E. Caldera addressed the Association of the United States Army (AUSA), he highlighted leader development in a changing global environment where Army Transformation and the Army's service to the nation demands a full range of adaptive military-leader-skill sets and attributes.

3. U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), June 1999), Appendix B.

4. U.S. Army FM 1, *The Army*, "The Army Imperatives," online <www.adtdl.army.mil/cgi-bin/atdl.dll/fm/1/fevr-out.gif>.

5. Colonel Jon H. Moilanen and Lieutenant Colonel Donald M. Craig, "Leader Development in a Transforming Army," *Military Review* (May-June 2000), 12-16. The authors provide insight from a yearlong (December 1998 to January 2000) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) study group on Training, Leader Development, and Soldiers. One of the study's principal recommendations was to develop an adaptive learning model to train and educate leaders, soldiers, and teams in ambiguous and complex settings. Aspects of the study were used during the development of the initial U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command training program for key Interim Brigade Combat Team leaders in 2000-2001.

6. General John N. Abrams, "Training in the 21st Century," *Army* (Arlington, VA: AUSA, February 1999), 15.

7. The Competency Learning Model illustrates the integration of leadership doctrine; full-spectrum mission sets; training and education constructs that provide for sequential and complementary echelons of mission vignette exercise and iteration; mentoring; the three types of simulation environments and Training Aids, Devices, Simulations and Simulators (TADSS) spanning garrison to operational missions; and individual, leader, and team responsibility for teamwork and leader development.

8. Abrams, 16.

9. A 360-degree assessment and feedback survey is used to "monitor a leaders' performance through the use of a set of core competencies that are aligned with the organization's strategy." See <www.assessment360.com/LPS\_marketing/>.

10. Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army, *The Army Plan (IAP) for Fiscal Year 2000-2015* (Washington, DC: GPO, 24 March 1998).

11. General George S. Patton, Jr., *War As I Knew It* (New York: Bantam Books, 1981), 317.

*Colonel Jon H. Moilanen, Dean of Students and Administration at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), received a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, an M.A. from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and is a graduate of CGSC, the Logistics Executive Development Course at the U.S. Army Logistics Management College, and the U.S. Army War College. He has served in various command and staff positions in the United States, Germany, and Korea. Recent assignments include director, CGSC School for Command Preparation; chief of staff, Task Force Training, Leader Development, and Soldiers; and director, CGSC Exercise Prairie Warrior. His articles have been published in Armor, Infantry, Army Logistician, and the National Defense University's Essays on Strategy XIII. His article "Leader Development in a Transforming Army" appeared in the May/June 2000 issue of Military Review.*